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ABSTRACT

In fall 2002 staff of the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) Office of Institutional Research collaborated with occupational deans, academic deans, and faculty to develop and administer a survey of former business students. The survey was designed to determine how well courses had met the needs of former business students in the areas of General Business, Management, Marketing, and Real Estate. A total of 755 surveys were sent to former students, with 186 returned, for a response rate of 24.6%. Higher proportions of respondents indicated their primary Business program as General Business with a transfer focus or General Business than other options. The report provides information on course areas in which the majority of students thought they had been well prepared, and content areas in which some students thought they had not been well prepared for employment. The report also shows business skills areas in which students did and did not think that they had been well-prepared. Information is provided about the salaries and hourly wages of former business students. Almost 25% of respondents indicated that they have no interest in further education at the time of the survey, a finding perhaps reflective of an older student population. About 29% of students indicated that distance education was the most convenient way for them to take classes. (SLD)

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ED 479 972

A Survey of Former Business Students (General Business, Management, Marketing, Real Estate)

Summary Findings of Respondents District-wide

April 2003

Office of Institutional Research
Los Rios Community College District

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A SURVEY OF FORMER BUSINESS STUDENTS
(General Business, Management, Marketing, Real Estate)
Summary Findings of Respondents District-wide
April 2003

During Fall 2002 staff of the Los Rios Community College District Office of Institutional Research collaborated with occupational education and academic deans and Business faculty to develop and administer a survey of former Business students. The program-specific survey was designed to determine how well courses met the needs of former Business students, both those who earned degrees and certificates as well as those who did not. A total of 755* surveys were sent out to former students, with a total of 186 returned, for a 24.6% response rate.

Table 1: Business Survey Rate of Return

	Total Surveys Mailed*	Total Surveys Returned	% Returned
ARC	332	84	25.3%
CRC	218	56	25.7%
SCC	205	46	22.4%
TOTAL	755	186	24.6%

* Adjusted for undeliverable mail.

Who Responded to This Survey?

Higher proportions of respondents indicated their primary Business program concentration as General Business with a transfer focus (29.7%) or General Business (25.9%) than other program options. Fairly equal proportions of respondents indicated their program concentration as either Small Business Management (9.7%), Real Estate (9.2%), Management (8.6%) or Marketing (3.2%). Of interest is the 13.5% of respondents who indicated their program concentration was in an area other than Business with Accounting the most commonly identified program by those who specified. Higher proportions of respondents are non-returning students (67.7%) rather than degree earners (32.3%). Respondents tended to reflect an older student population (61.8% are 30 years or older), many who are taking their business courses with the goal to improve current job performance (43.0%).

Highlights of the survey results follow. For more information, please refer to the more comprehensive frequency distribution reports.

Business Course Content Areas Where the Majority of Former Business Students Believed They Were Very Prepared

The following table illustrates Business course content areas by program concentration that respondents believed prepared them very well for employment, ranging from 21.0% to 19.1% of respondents. Although there were no skill areas where approximately 20% of respondents felt they were very prepared for employment as a result of taking our courses in the areas of Marketing, Real Estate and Small Business Management, there were substantial proportions of respondents who did feel their courses in these areas adequately prepared them for their employment goals.

Table 2: Business Course Content Areas Where the Majority of Students Believed They Were Very Prepared

Rank	Business Course Content Areas	% Very Prepared
	General Business	
1.	Understanding the functional areas of business operations	21.0%
2.	Understand the economic environments in which businesses operate	19.8%
3.	Understand the legal and government environments in which businesses operate	19.1%
	Management	
1.	Ability to apply management functions to business situations (i.e., planning, organization staffing, leadership roles and cost control)	20.9%
2.	Ability to solve management problems	20.6%
3.	Ability to apply various organizational design essentials to achieve goals (i.e., communication, employee relations, planning and resource allocation)	19.9%
4.	Ability to apply principles of time management	19.8%

Business Course Content Areas Where Some Business Students Believed They Were Not Prepared

Overall, students feel adequately or very prepared by their Business courses but there were areas where 15.0% or more of the respondents believed they were not prepared as illustrated in Table 3. More respondents felt they did not have an understanding of the legal requirements and government regulations as they apply to small business after taking small business management courses. Worth noting are the 14.6% of respondents who felt they were not prepared with an understanding of the legal and government environments in which businesses operate as a result of taking their general business courses.

Table 3: Business Course Content Areas Where Some Students Believed They Were Not Prepared

Rank	Business Course Skill Areas	% Not Prepared
	Small Business Management	
1.	Understanding of legal requirements and government regulations as they apply to the small business	20.7%
2.	Ability to develop a comprehensive small business plan	17.9%
3.	Ability to evaluate financial reports	15.7%

Employment Skill Areas Where Some Business Students Believed They Were Very Prepared

In each of the employment skill areas over twenty-five percent of respondents felt they were very prepared as a result of taking our business courses, except in the area of leadership and decision making in which a slightly lower 23.9% of respondents did. The following highlights those areas where over 30.0% of respondents felt they were very prepared as a result of taking our business courses.

Table 4: Employment Skill Areas Where Some Students Believed They Were Very Prepared

Rank	Employment Skill Areas	% Very Prepared
1.	Working with Diverse Populations	42.0%
2.	Working within Team Environments	39.2%
3.	Communication Skills (speaking and listening)	35.4%
4.	Professionalism in Work Place	34.1%
5.	Problem Solving, Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills	32.4%
6.	Customer Service Skills	31.3%

Employment Skill Areas Where Some Business Students Believed They Were Not Prepared

Although most respondents felt they were very prepared in various employment skill areas there were two areas where 10.0% or more of respondents felt they were not prepared as a result of taking our business courses which are illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Employment Skill Areas Where Some Students Believed They Were Not Prepared

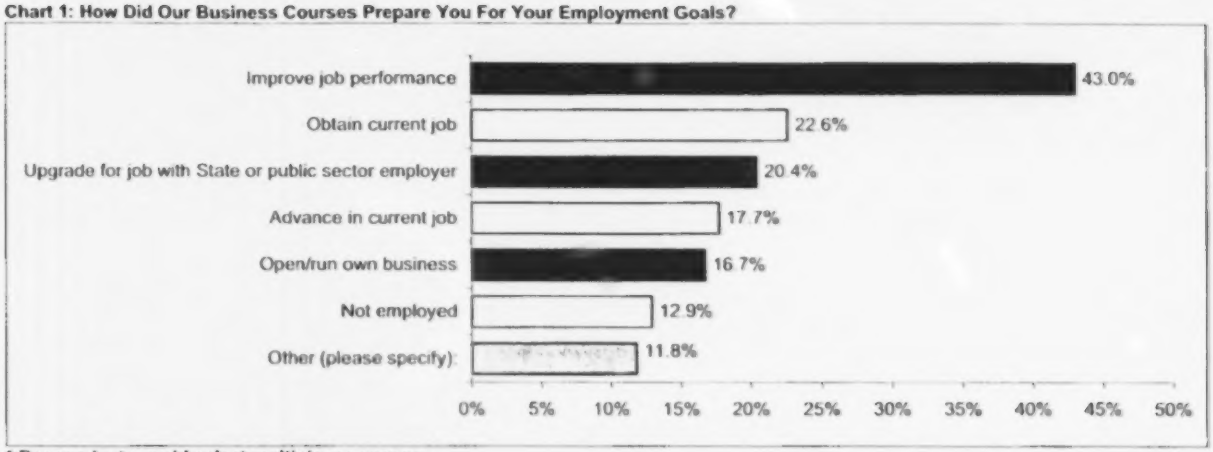
Rank	Employment Skill Areas	% Not Prepared
1.	Oral Presentation Skills	13.2%
2.	Leadership and Decision Making Skills	10.0%

Employment and Salary Information

Of the former Business students who responded to the survey, 68.0% are currently working in the Business field. Of those who earned a Business degree or certificate, 68.9% are currently working in the Business field. Of additional interest is the similar proportions of non-degree and certificate earners (67.6%) who also indicated they work in the Business field. Of those who are currently employed, 42.1% are working in the public sector while 31.6% are working in the private sector. Of additional interest are the 10.5% who are self-employed in their own business and the 7.0% of respondents who are currently not employed.

With 68.0% of respondents indicating they are currently working in the Business field, it is of interest to see how respondents felt their Business courses prepared them for their employment goals. Chart 1 demonstrates that 43.0% of respondents felt their Business courses helped them improve their job performance while 22.6% indicated their courses helped them obtain their current job.

Chart 1: How Did Our Business Courses Prepare You For Your Employment Goals?

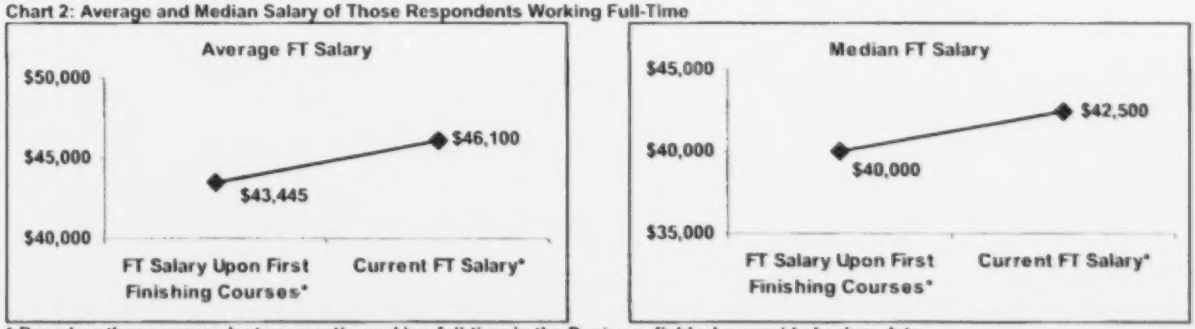


*** Respondents could select multiple responses.**

Substantial proportions of respondents, 20.4%, indicated their coursework helped them to upgrade skills as required for a job with the State of California or other public sector employer.

Survey respondents were also asked a series of questions regarding their salary status in the Business field. Information provided from those who are now working full-time in Business reveals an average full-time salary of $43,445 upon first finishing their Business courses that increased to an average $46,100 within two years.

Chart 2: Average and Median Salary of Those Respondents Working Full-Time

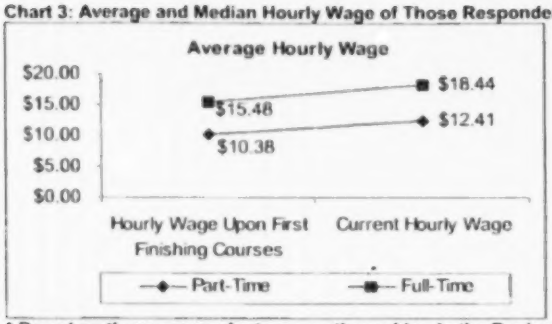


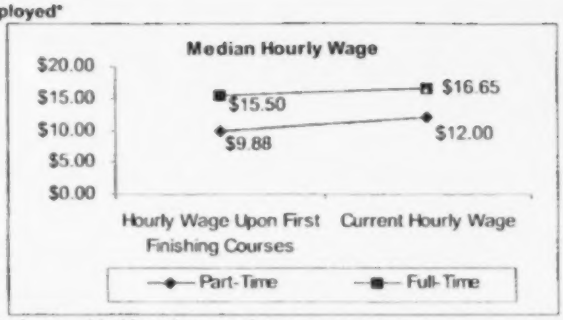
*** Based on those respondents currently working full-time in the Business field who provided salary data.**

With almost one third, 32.0%, of respondents working in a field other than Business it is interesting that their average salary of $35,025 upon first finishing their Business courses increased to an average $45,267 within two years. Perhaps a benefit of their coursework was not only to improve job performance as indicated above in Chart 1, but also to improve salaries, as well.

Of additional interest is salary information based on both part-time and full-time hourly wage data provided by survey respondents. Those currently employed in the Business field reveal an average part-time hourly wage of $10.38 that increased to $12.41 within two years. In addition, those currently working full-time in the Business field revealed an hourly rate wage of $15.48 that increased to $18.44. Those employed full-time indicated an average of 39.5 hours worked per week upon first finishing; this average has remained relatively unchanged over two years. Those respondents employed part-time indicated an average 24.1 hours worked per week upon first finishing their courses that remained unchanged.

Chart 3: Average and Median Hourly Wage of Those Respondents Employed*





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The Transfer Path

A substantial proportion (41.9%) of survey respondents are either currently taking or interested in taking courses at a 4-year college or university, while 28.0% of respondents indicated they are either currently taking or interested in taking courses at one of our Los Rios colleges. Of those who responded to this survey and have transferred, 25.3% indicated that their Los Rios college courses provided a generally good preparation for their 4-year college or university coursework. Those who have transferred were asked to provide their major or program of study at their 4-year institution. Results reveal a wide array of interests within Business, including Finance, Business Management, Accounting, Marketing, Human Resources and Real Estate. Respondents also continue their education in program concentration areas outside of Business, focusing in areas like English, Psychology and Communication.

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the Business population from which the survey sample was drawn and the profile of survey respondents follow.

Table 6: Demographic Profile of Business Sample Population and Survey Respondents by Proportions

	Sample Population	Survey Respondents
Gender		
Female	60.3%	71.0%
Male	39.7%	29.0%
Ethnicity		
African American	10.9%	10.8%
Asian	15.5%	16.1%
Filipino	2.3%	1.6%
Latino	13.4%	10.8%
Native American	9.6%	1.6%
Pacific Islander	1.4%	0.0%
White	55.6%	57.5%
Other and Unknown	3.1%	1.6%
Age		
Under 18 years	0.1%	0.0%
18-20 years	9.4%	10.2%
21-24 years	22.8%	14.5%
25-29 years	16.0%	13.4%
30-39 years	25.1%	22.6%
40 years and over	26.7%	39.2%
By Degree Type		
Degree Earner	22.5%	32.3%
Non-Degree/Certificate Earner	77.5%	67.7%
By Type of Degree (TOP Code)		
Business: General (050100)	77.7%	80.0%
Business: Management (050600)	10.2%	11.7%
Business: Marketing (50900)	0.5%	1.7%
Business: Real Estate (051100)	11.7%	6.7%

Survey Highlights

The following are further highlights of the Business survey results:

- Reflective of an older student population, most likely juggling school, family and careers, almost twenty-five percent (24.7%) of respondents indicated they have no interest to further pursue their education at this time
- Again, indicative of their busy schedules, respondents who have interest in more education indicated weekday evenings (32.8%) and weekends (23.1%) were the most convenient times to take classes
- Of additional interest are the respondents who indicated Distance Education was the most convenient way for them to take classes, specifically web-based courses (29.6%) followed by TV courses (17.2%)
- 44.4%, answered, yes, they would be interested in a short (about 9 hours) continuing education course related to Business at our colleges
- Only 6.8% of respondents indicated they would be interested in participating in a Business program advisory committee, while 27.1% responded they might have an interest and 51.4% are not interested in participating

This summary report was written by Betty Glyer-Culver, Research Analyst, LRCCD Office of Institutional Research (IR) and is based on research conducted by the "Former Student Follow-up Studies" team: research design, analysis, and report writing -- Betty Glyer-Culver, Research Analyst; Web survey and SQL Server support and development -- Minh La, IT Analyst for Institutional Research; coordination of survey mailings -- Chue Lo, Secretary. The *Former Student Follow-up Study* Team gratefully acknowledges input related to survey and report development by IR Director, Judy Beachler, program-specific question development by the occupational education and academic area deans and faculty at the colleges, and the District Office of Workforce and Economic Development under the direction of Sandy Kirschenmann for Vocational and Technical Education Act (VTEA) funds which partially supported this project in compliance with funding requirements of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. Additional copies of this report, as well as the more comprehensive program level reports, can be downloaded from our Web Site at: http://irweb.losrios.edu or by calling 916-568-3131.

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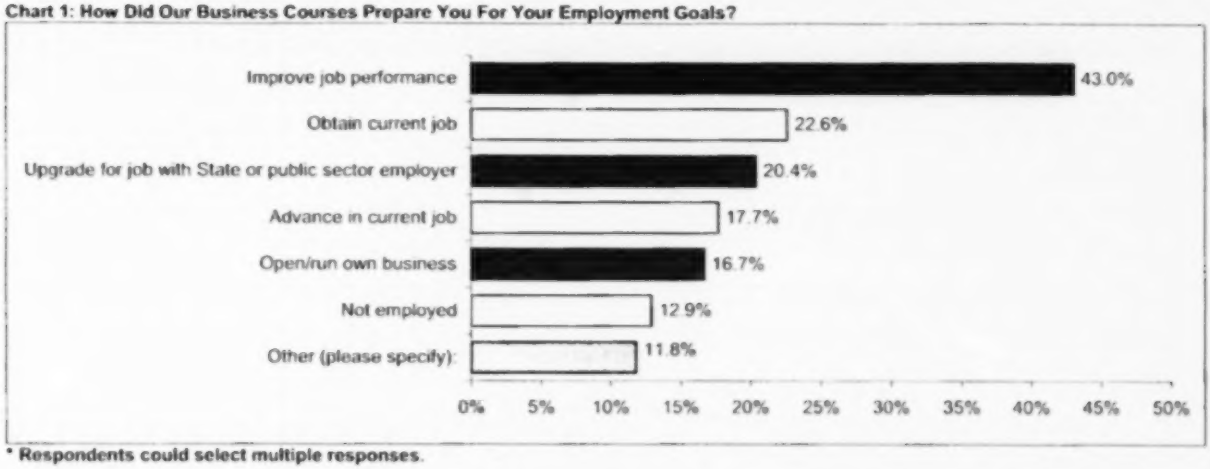

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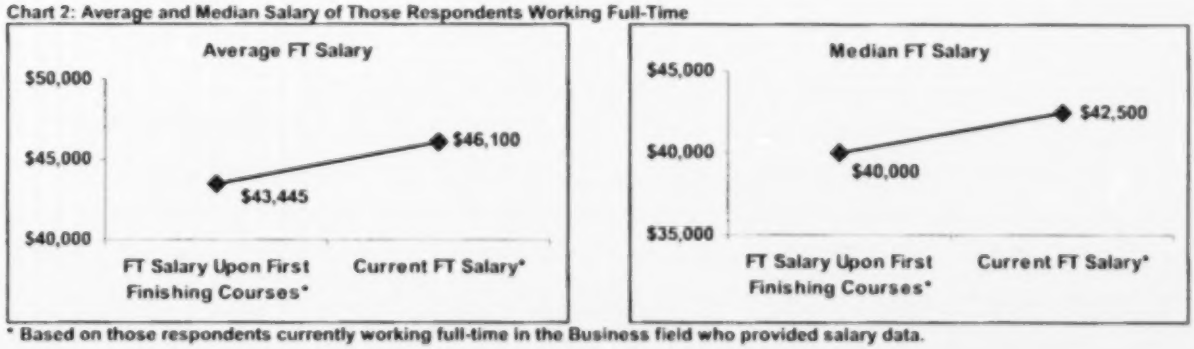

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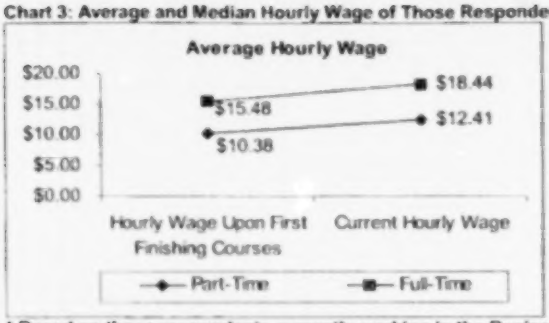

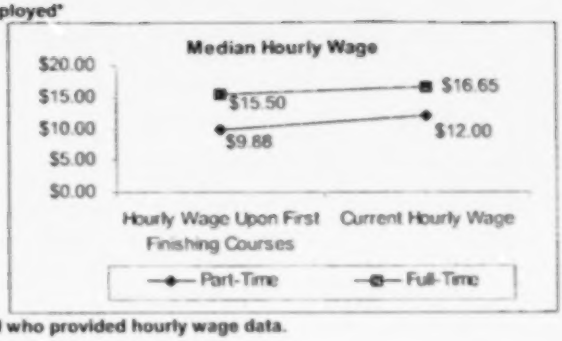

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Native American	9.6%	1.6%
Pacific Islander	1.4%	0.0%
White	55.6%	57.5%
Other and Unknown	3.1%	1.6%
Age		
Under 18 years	0.1%	0.0%
18-20 years	9.4%	10.2%
21-24 years	22.8%	14.5%
25-29 years	16.0%	13.4%
30-39 years	25.1%	22.6%
40 years and over	26.7%	39.2%
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